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SPIRTO Self Produced Images Risk Taking Online

Citation for published version:

Quayle, E, Cooper, K, Hervy, K & Burls, K 2015, *SPIRTO Self Produced Images Risk Taking Online: Final Public Report*. University of Edinburgh. <<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/>>

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SI-2012-KEP-411207

SPIRTO

Final public report for publishing

Deliverable number	<i>D1.5.2</i>
Dissemination level	<i>Public</i>
Delivery date	<i>15 July 2015</i>
Status	<i>Final</i>
Authors(s)	<i>Ethel Quayle, Karen Cooper, Katia Hervy, Kate Burls</i>



Safer Internet 2009-2013

This project is funded under the Safer Internet programme 2009-2013¹, a multiannual Community Programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies.



SPIRTO

Self Produced Images Risk Taking Online

Final Public Report

www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk



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GRANT AGREEMENT SI-2012-KEP-411207

ABOUT SPIRTO

SPIRTO is a research project funded by the European Safer Internet Programme of the European Commission, as a Knowledge Enhancement Project. Its duration was 30 months (December 2012 – May 2015). Its goal was to build an evidence base of the risks associated for adolescents with the move to merged technology, in particular mobile or hand held devices.

Our focus was on risk related to the capacity to generate sexual content (often described as sexting). We wished to understand the different contexts behind the creation of these sexual images and the consequences for the young people involved. The final aim of the project was to develop training materials for professionals working with young people and parents. This would seek to provide information, enable further discussion with young people about risk, and examine effective ways of sharing knowledge.



The project was managed and co-ordinated by The University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in partnership with: Linköping University, Sweden; Innocence in Danger, Germany; Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, United Kingdom (now under the command of the National Crime Agency, UK).

PARTICIPANTS



Partner 1 - UEDIN

The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
School of Health and Social Sciences,
Clinical Psychology



Ethel Quayle

Ethel is senior lecturer and a clinical psychologist with a special interest in technology mediated violence against children. For the last fourteen years she has been working in the area of internet abuse images, collaborating internationally with government and non-government agencies. The work led to the development of the COPINE scale, a modified version of which is used to determine the level of severity in IIOC.



Karen Cooper

Karen is a researcher with a background in Criminology and Sociology. She has previously worked in the Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services and at the Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford. Karen's main areas of research have been in youth risk-taking and offending and the re-engagement of young offenders with education and learning.



Katia Hervy

Katia is Spirto's Project Administrator. She also works for several EU research projects (FP7) as Event Coordinator and Project Manager. She coordinates the translation of the eurostemcell.org website and resources and is Production Manager for documentaries on stem cell research.



Partner 2 – LIU

Linköping University, Sweden
Department of Child and Experimental Medicine (IKE)



Carl-Göran Svedin

Professor and Senior consultant in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry with special focus on child physical and sexual abuse. He was author of two studies central to the understanding of illegal images of children (IIOC). His work published with Back in 1997 and 2003, forms the basis for existing knowledge of the consequences of child abuse through illegal image production.

Partner 2 – LIU



Linda Jonsson

Bachelor of social science and PhD student. Linda's PhD project focuses on youth and online sexual abuse. Linda is author of a recently published report about Swedish youth selling sex online.



Partner 3 - IID

Innocence in Danger, Germany



Julia von Weiler

Julia is since 2003 Director of Innocence in Danger e.V. the German section of an international network working against sexual abuse, with a special commitment to prevent the spread of child abusive images through the internet. As a trained Psychologist she has worked extensively to provide support to children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.



Partner 4 – CEOP

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre



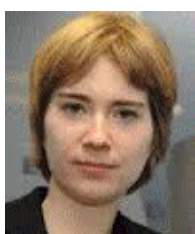
Jonathan Baggaley

Jonathan is the Head of Education at CEOP. He leads the delivery of its online safety programme *Thinkuknow* for young people, parents, carers and educators.



Kate Burls

Kate is the education tem coordinator at CEOP. Kate has led the development of a range of *Thinkuknow* resources and campaigns, and delivers CEOP's Ambassador training course.



Zoe Hilton

Zoe is the Head of Safeguarding and Child Protection at CEOP. Before joining CEOP she was the NSPCC's National Policy Adviser for Child Protection and worked as the society's policy lead for sexual abuse and exploitation (including the internet and trafficking).

CONTEXT

Self-produced nude or sexual images (and sometimes sexual texts) have become an increasing source of interest and concern by specialist agencies such as law enforcement and educationalists, as well as the general public. The production of these images is often referred to as sexting which has been defined as the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.

While there is considerable media-generated and academic interest in young people's reasons for sexting, there remains a surprising lack of quality, in-depth research exploring their motivations and experiences of the activity. Klettke, Hallford and Mellor (2014) identified a number of methodological constraints evident within the research field which include a focus on survey data and self-selected samples, lack of validated measures and reliance on self-report data: factors which have reduced the generalizability and explanatory power of some findings and led to a largely 'disparate' literature base.

Our review of the literature suggested that sexting conduct can be varied in terms of context, meaning and intention and identified important issues for future research, including further exploration of young people's motivations for making and sending self-produced sexual content. For some young people, self-producing images is a means of flirting and teenage experimentation, or a way of enhancing a sexual relationship. For other young people however, sexting practices may be a 'marker of further risk' (Houck et al., 2014:6; Jonsson, Priebe, Bladh & Svedin, 2014; Jonsson, Bladh, Priebe & Svedin, 2015), for example, in terms of engaging in early sexual behaviour and risky sexual practices or by demonstrating a potential vulnerability to victimisation, cyberbullying and online grooming (Korenis & Billick, 2014). However, while the emphasis has largely been on negative outcomes, Hasinoff (2013) points out that in order to accurately recognise non-consensual, harmful, malicious behaviours, it is a prerequisite to understand that sexting can be consensual. Powell and Henry (2014) therefore argue that our understanding of sexting needs to recognise the complexity of sexting behaviour and be able to make a distinction between consensual and non-consensual creation and distribution of sexual images. This is necessary if it is going to inform legal, policy and education resources.

Recognising a distinction between those young people who willingly seek to make and send sexual images and those who feel some element of coercion is important within gender debates. Issues around female sexting are often inextricably linked to broader moral concerns about the sexualisation of girls within popular culture and the pressures they face to live up to gendered sexual ideals (Hasinoff, 2013; Karaian, 2012; Rollins, 2015). There is evidence that some girls may have more negative sexting experiences, with the potential for

partner and peer pressure to make and send images, and the need to negotiate the social and cultural double standards of female sexual reputation if their activities are made public. However, in contrast to these concerns, some authors have advocated sexting as an opportunity for females to embrace sexual images as a self-mediated practice of creativity and self-reflection (see for example, Hasinoff, 2013).

Contextualising young people's experiences within a broader socio-cultural and contemporary media landscape further highlights both the changing perceptions around adolescent sexual identity, risk and sexualisation and the increasing intersection between on and offline behaviours (Dir, Cyders & Coskunpiner, 2013). Within this framework it is necessary to understand the 'very different kinds of concerns, ethics and aesthetics that pertain to different sexting scenarios' (Albury & Crawford, 2012:468). Reynolds, Henson & Fisher (2014) suggest that consideration of these various factors requires a need for more theoretically informed research on sexting, including young people's perceptions and attitudes as well as a more qualitative exploration of their lifestyles and personality traits. Common to a number of research findings is not only the on-going gap in rigorous research about sexting (Walker, Sanci & Temple-Smith, 2011) but the need for recognition of both the multifaceted nature of sexual interactions and the importance of further unpicking these interactions to determine what sexting means to young people, their reasons for sexting, the specific contexts in which the activity occurs, and the consequences that follow on from sexting experiences.



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

RESEARCH

The project aimed to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore this phenomenon of self-produced images. At the outset there were three stages identified:

STAGE ONE: The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) acts as the UK hub for the International Child Sexual Exploitation image database (ICSE DB) which is managed by Interpol. Existing, anonymised, archival data relating to identified children of all ages would be used to establish changes in patterns of (illegal) image production, with a focus on countries within the European Union. It was anticipated that the data base would give anonymised information about the numbers of young people entered into ICSE-DB, the date that they were identified, the age and gender of the young person and information as to whom the images were produced by. It was felt that this would provide a unique opportunity to establish the first baseline that relates to identified children and should be a good indicator of one aspect of risk taking, namely the creation of self-produced images by young people through mobile devices. This would have relevance across Europe and could be used to monitor changing patterns of image production by young people in relation to merged technology.

STAGE TWO: It was hoped that the information from Stage one would also provide a platform to explore, with a sample of these young people along with others identified through the therapeutic and child protection services in Sweden, the UK and Germany, the contexts in which the images were generated, the decisions that led to them being uploaded, and the consequences following this, including the procedural ones that followed any investigation. This sample was to include children who had been groomed online and coerced into sending sexualised images of themselves by adults and peers as well as those young people for whom image production was about exploring their sexuality or as part of a 'romantic' relationship. It was planned that these interviews would take place across three European countries with 60 young people and would be analysed using grounded theory methodology to generate a model of risk taking in relation to the affordances of merged technologies and user generated content. We were aware that these interviews, along with the quantitative data in Stage one, would present complex ethical issues for the project.

STAGE THREE of the proposed project was to build directly on the data analysis from the two previous stages and be used to communicate the findings to parents, and professionals working with children, through a series of workshops. A survey by Duerager & Livingstone et al (2012) conducted as part of the EU Kids Online Project concluded that "Importantly, while restrictive mediation is clearly associated with lower risk, there is also evidence that parental active mediation of internet use - i.e. parents talking to their child about the internet, staying nearby or sitting with them while they go online, encouraging them to explore the internet, and sharing online activities with them - can reduce online risks, notably without reducing their opportunities" (p 3). It was planned that 9 pilot workshops would provide an educational model of practical engagement, exploring opportunities for adults to engage with and support young people in their use of mobile phones and other hand held devices. These workshops, with particular reference to work books and session guidelines, would be designed with young people as consultants and delivered through various media, with an emphasis on participant involvement in converged technology use. One feature of these training materials was to be the production of an education film, which can be used in the proposed workshops and as a further educational tool for young people.

This research project aimed to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the phenomenon of self-produced nude and nearly nude images by adolescents, which were subsequently distributed through fixed and mobile technology.

These 3 stages allowed us to produce:

- **A literature review**
- **An analysis of identified children with a focus on self-produced images**
- **A qualitative analysis of the interviews, which focused on the context and consequences for young people of self-produced images**

These reports formed the basis for the production of our training materials, including the film clips, which were piloted across the three countries. The films themselves were available in English, German and Swedish. As these training materials were for parents and care givers the focus was different from other educational materials in that the take home messages provided strategies for talking to young people, diffusing difficult situations, and having practical solutions when things did go wrong.

The films were launched in the UK by CEOP on the 16th June with parallel activities in both Germany and Sweden. This involved a large number of television and radio interviews at both national and regional levels (reaching an estimated 42 million viewers/listeners) and a high number of people accessing and downloading the materials from the CEOP website (<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Nude-Selfies-What-parents-and-carers-need-to-know/>). The evaluation of the workshops indicated that they had overall a positive impact on knowledge, attitudes and planned behaviours by both parents and professionals. While there were some country-specific differences, in general it seemed that the materials were well received and worth further dissemination and evaluation.

The project faced challenges in that the ICSE-DB did not routinely collect data across all of the Interpol countries that would help us address our questions about self-produced images. Our solution to this was to use UK identified cases, which we continued to update up to the end of 2014. However, this strategy did not allow us to look across countries nor did it facilitate the recruitment of young people to be interviewed.

Other challenges included the recruitment of young people in Sweden and Germany. In spite of considerable time and effort only 10 children were interviewed in Sweden and we had no cases in Germany that met our inclusion criteria. Recruitment in the UK proved easier than expected although not surprisingly given the location of the UK partner, many of these were living in Scotland. In the end we achieved a sample of 52 participants, which was still large for a qualitative study and which also enabled the collection of additional quantitative data.

The project allowed for additional, unplanned activities that included:

- **Focus groups with young people in relation to existing educational resources as well as focus groups with parents and practitioners about the content of the films and workshops**
- **A searchable database of research articles and reports that relate to self-produced images**

All of this work involved collaboration between partners as well as with other stakeholders including child and adolescent units, schools, law enforcement, project workers, charities and NGOs. Most importantly it included young people in the research as participants, advisors and, at times, as critics. We also benefited from having input from our two external reviewers who offered supportive and constructive criticism. We are optimistic that the outputs from the project will continue to be used and will form part of the educational resources available through CEOP as well as in Germany and Sweden. In this we will have achieved our objectives which hopefully will continue to have a positive impact.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite increasing public interest and concern about young people's involvement in the self-production of sexual images (or 'sexting'), there remains a dearth of research into their reasons for making and sending images, the processes involved, and the consequences arising from their experiences. SPIRTO produced an article reviewing the motivational, lifestyle and personality factors influencing adolescent sexting practices and exploring the research evidence within the wider context of debates around contemporary social and visual media cultures and gender.

A systematic search of databases was conducted and eighty-eight records were identified for inclusion in the review. The findings reveal that sexting is remarkably varied in terms of context, meaning and intention, with the potential for consensual and non-consensual aspects of the activity.

The aim of this review is to assist in providing a clearer, more rounded picture of the literature by detailing research findings and discussions around young people's sexting practices and the influence of motivational, lifestyle and personality factors on their experiences. With social media providing a platform for many adolescent social interactions and, increasingly, their sexual exploration and behaviours, the findings are outlined within the broader framework of adolescent online and mobile practices as well as debates around gender and social/visual media cultures, including risk and identity creation. These issues highlight the contemporary cultural and technological environment within which sexting takes place.

A list of 440 articles has been collated as a bibliography and is now available through a searchable database on SPIRTO's website.

FULL REVIEW and SEARCHABLE BIBLIOGRAPHY

<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/research/bibliography>

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the UK the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) is the hub for the International Child Sexual Exploitation image database (ICSE DB). This database is managed by Interpol and provides a powerful intelligence and investigative tool that allows specialised investigators to share information with colleagues on a global basis. It was launched in March 2009 as the successor to the Interpol Child Abuse Image Database (ICAID), which had been in use since 2001.

CEOP is part of the UK National Crime Agency and its operations faculty also incorporates the United Kingdom's only national victim identification program, which works solely to focus on identifying child victims of online abuse and to support investigators in sharing any intelligence that can be gathered from seized images. The information in the database relates to children, identified through image analysis and specialist and routine policing, whose images meet the criteria for indecency across most jurisdictions (see Gillespie, 2010). At the beginning of 2013, the ICSE DB included data on 3,000 identified victims from more than 40 countries, as well as data related to numerous unidentified victims, whose cases are yet to be investigated.

For the purposes of this study, 472 'cases' were identified from the database by CEOP as representing the total number of children identified through UK police investigation whose data had been submitted to Interpol. Each case represented an individual child who had been identified. Child was defined as someone under the age of 18 years.

We had unanticipated challenges with access to the data, security clearance associated with access, and problems related to the database and how cases were entered. We addressed these challenges by working with Interpol staff, and gaining security clearance for relevant staff. There were continuing delays with access to the total sample from ICSE DB. A decision was made to focus on the UK ICSE-DB cases which were crosschecked against supporting documentation, recoded where necessary, and analysed using SPSS.

Of the 472 cases of children identified in the UK-claimed entries into the ICSE DB, 45.8% were known to have self-produced sexual images (through mobile phones or web cameras), 32.8% in the context of coercive relationships.

FULL REPORT

<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/research/quantitative-analysis-icse-db>

Preliminary findings of the initial analysis including 350 cases to June 2013, published in SPIRTO's Newsletter February 2014:

Online self-taken images

We examined 350 cases of children under 18 who had been identified in the UK from April 2006 to June 2013, as appearing in online sexual images which were, or could be, illegal under UK law.

There was a year-on-year increase in the number of children identified
2006
2013

69.7% of cases were female



Picture taken by

self-taken

stranger

trusted adult

family friend

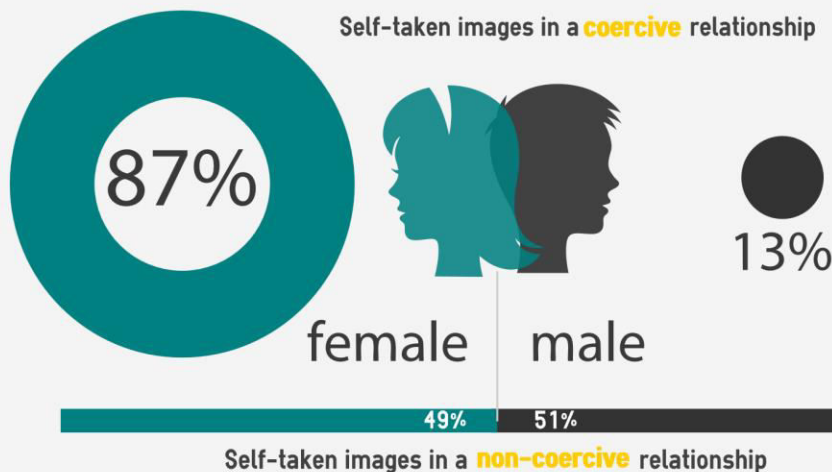
intra-family

7-11 yrs

0-6 yrs

Who took the photo and what was the likely age of the child?

Self-taken images in a **coercive** relationship



Self-taken images in a **non-coercive** relationship



The full report will be available at:
www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk



The SPIRTO project aims to understand the different contexts behind the creation of self-taken sexual images and the consequences for the young people involved.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

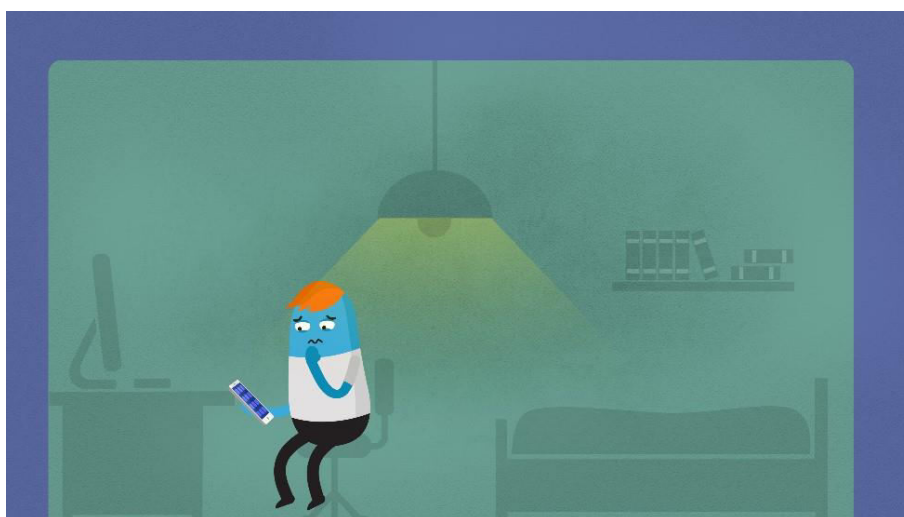
The project attempted to gain qualitative information, using semi-structured interviews, from young people themselves. These interviews explored the experience of merged technology practices, looking at the processes and contexts in which user-generated images were created through mobile devices.

There is very little documented information regarding how children describe their online experiences in relation to sexual image production. Existing methodologies of related research have relied upon structured telephone-questionnaire type interviews (e.g. Wolak et al., 2006), although more general explorations of children's online experiences have used a wider range of methodologies, including focus groups (e.g. Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

The original methodology (Grounded Theory) for the interview data was changed to Framework Analysis. We felt that this better reflected the possible number of interviews to be analysed and had been used effectively with other projects involving multi-disciplinary and dispersed teams of researchers (Gale et al, 2013). We continued to use and develop Framework Methods for the interview data and employed Dedoose data analysis software to this end. A decision was made following the mid-project review not to attempt to recruit young people through the ICSE-DB.

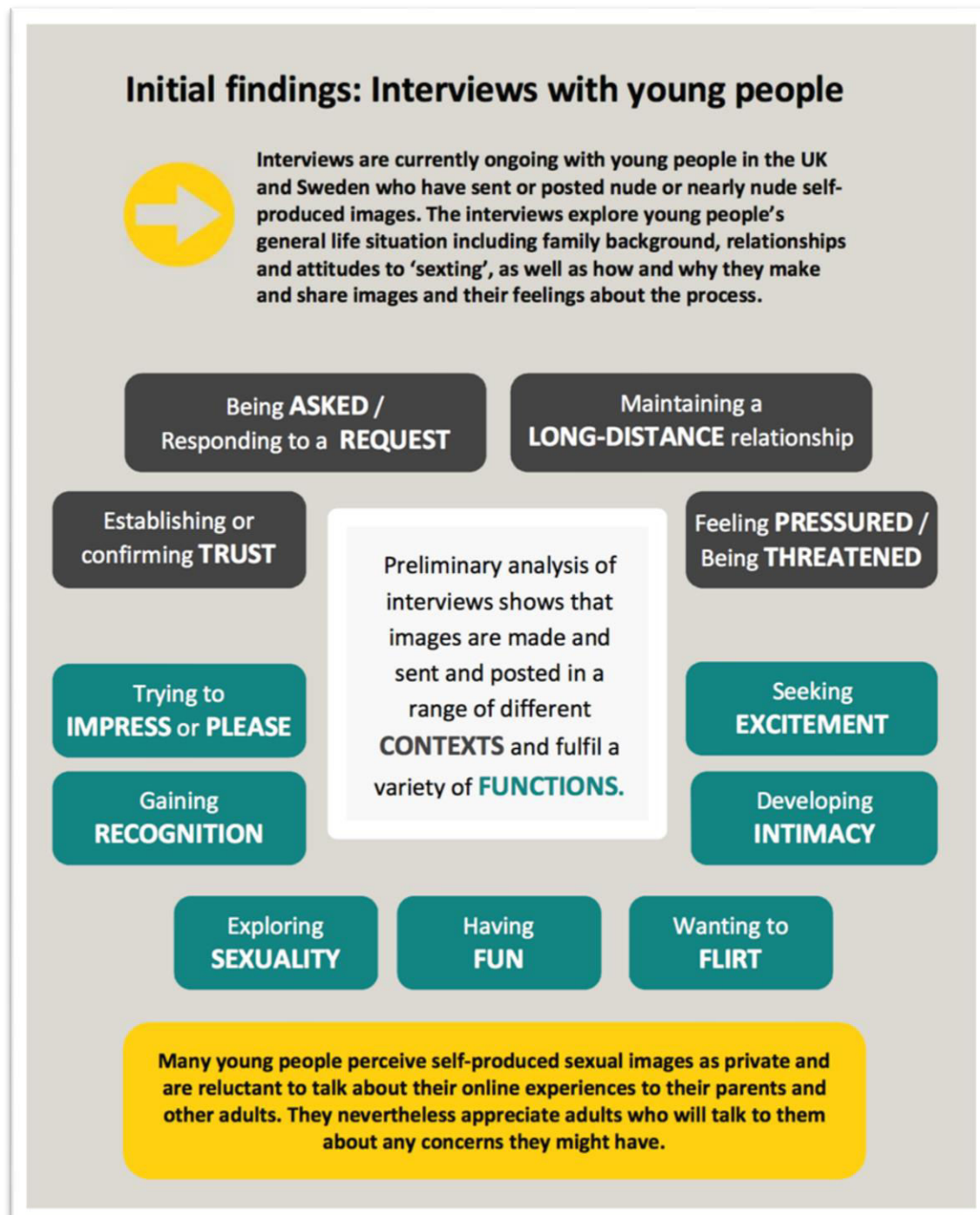
FULL REPORT

<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/research/findings>

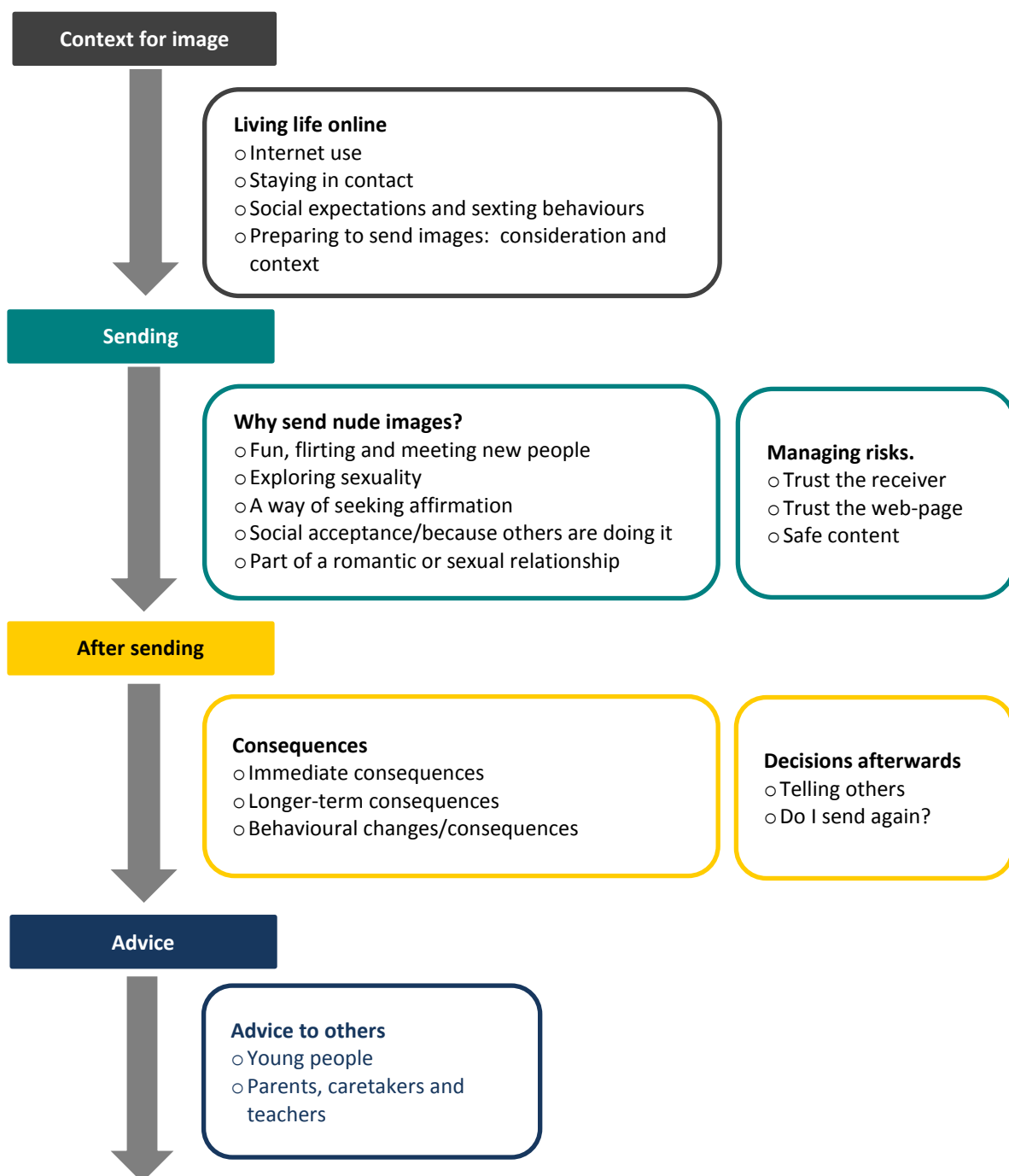


Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

Initial findings published in SPIRTO's Newsletter February 2015:



The interviews generated a range of rich descriptive data across the topics of interest. During analysis different stages in the process of sending nude or nearly nude images were identified and six main themes with 20 subthemes were created.



Based on the findings from the interviews with 51 young people, the following advice and implications have been identified.

For young people:

- Know and trust the person(s) you send images to
- Never feel pressured or coerced into sending an image
- Nude images are not a self-evident part of a romantic or sexual relationship.
- Only send images that feel confident and comfortable being viewed by others
- If you hesitate or have concerns- don't send!

For parents/carers:

- Keep up to date with youth activities online and ask your child about their life both online and offline.
- Understand that sending images is a natural part of growing up for some young people and talk through the reasons for sending images.
- Discuss with your child what risks that can occur when sending a nude image.
- If your child experiences any negative consequences of sending a nude image, be supportive and talk to your child: do not judge or get angry.

For teachers and professionals:

- All personnel at schools need continuous education about young people's online activities, including the sending of nude images, as part of more general education about safe relationships with peers and adults.
- All students need education in school about how to be safe online, including information about the positive and negative consequences of sending nude images.
- Education is needed about the role of the receiver. All young people should be made aware of how non-consensual sharing of images can hurt reputations and pride and is a breach of trust.
- If a young person's nude image is spread without their consent at school, actions should be taken to ensure students within the school delete the images from their computers and mobile phones.

INTERVIEW CASE STUDIES

The interview case studies were presented as a short report to detail the experiences of five young people, aged 14 - 19 years, who have sent or posted self-produced nude or nearly-nude images via a mobile or the internet. The five individuals were selected from the total sample of 51 SPIRTO participants to represent a range of different (positive and negative) experiences. All five individuals were from the UK.

The data was collected during a face-to-face, semi-structured interview with the young person. During the discussion information was gathered about the young person's: personal identify; their mobile phone use; the contexts and reasons for taking and sending images; their experience of telling other people; the consequences they faced; and the advice they would give to others. A self-completed information sheet provided additional details on the background variables of each participant.

All interviewees gave their consent to take part in the study and their interviews were recorded digitally and then transcribed removing any identifiable material. To further ensure the young people's anonymity, a pseudonym was provided.

Taken together, the case studies not only provide valuable insights into young people's individual experiences but detail broader qualitative insights into adolescent behaviours, perceptions and attitudes in relation to the process and consequences of self-producing sexual images.

Hannah, Age 16

Hannah's experiences have changed her views on sexting. She believes that trust is a vital part of sharing self-produced images and that sexting should take place within a close relationship.

Hannah lacks confidence in her body image and often feels self-conscious in social groups. Her first experience of 'sexting' took place when she was persuaded by a friend to send a self-produced image to a boy she liked. Although Hannah worried about what would happen and felt very anxious about revealing her body, the positive reaction she received made her feel much better about the experience.

For the past eight months Hannah has had a boyfriend. They met through an on-line chat/dating web-site. Although they have only met in person once they started sexting as a way of furthering their relationship. They send text messages and use SKYPE; their images and interactions have gradually progressed from underwear to nudity.

Although Hannah still sometimes feels self-conscious about self-producing sexual images, the responses she gets from her boyfriend help to build her self-esteem.

Whilst Hannah trusts her boyfriend completely she still feels that she needs to have a 'smartness' about her behaviour and minimise the risks in case her images are shared non-consensually. She also ensures that they exchange images: '...he would always send first. So then he'd know...if he showed someone I could easily always do the same'.

Before, because I hadn't done it, I thought it was just the most terrible thing ever. But now that I've done it, it's not as bad as people think. Like, if it's to ... someone you trust, it's not that bad.

... the fact that you get compliments back, it kind of builds up your confidence a bit more – it makes you feel a bit nicer.

I don't ever put my head in it ...just in case they did ever get shown to someone.

Jess, Age 14

Jess has learned from her experiences and would not consider sexting again as she does not feel she can trust anyone enough to enjoy the experience. She has also realised that she needs to think carefully about her actions in future.

Jess was persuaded to send a self-produced sexual image to a boy she liked and had been exchanging flirty text messages with: *'I was talking to this boy for a while and then he asked for [an image] and I was just like 'nah...I just don't want to do it'. And... he was like, 'Oh I'll delete it' and 'you can delete it and it will be fine.'*

Although Jess felt slightly worried about forwarding anything, she was eventually convinced by the boy to send a topless image. Jess felt that she was caught up in the moment and believed that she trusted the boy. However, after she had sent the image he forwarded it to all his friends and it was later shared around the school Jess attends.

Jess felt extremely angry about the experience. Her anger later turned to embarrassment and shame as she began to consider what others might think about her actions. 'Girls... they get called things like 'slut' or whatever 'cause it's just not what you want to be caught doing... they think it's your fault for sending pictures or, like, think that you're trying to get attention.' In contrast, Jess feels that boys simply get called 'a lad' and face no real consequences for their actions.

Jess' school found out what had happened and spoke with her about the incident. Her parents and the Police were also informed. Jess was surprised that the matter was not taken any further and that the boy involved did not appear to get into any trouble, nor was he asked to delete the pictures.

...he was saying nice things and how much he wanted a picture and how it was just for him because he liked me ... trying to make me feel like I could trust him.

I liked him and I'd trusted him and I was angry with myself too for sending it.

I just wanted him to see that it can have consequences for the people involved because I don't even know what he thought about it all.

Callum, Age 15

Callum would advise others to try sexting if they are interested in the experience but to be aware that there are disadvantages and that a relationship might suffer. He believes that young people should talk things through and be aware of all the facts before they make any decisions.

Callum had been seeing his girlfriend for a couple of months and wanted to take their relationship to the next level. Callum's girlfriend knew some friends who had tried sexting and suggested that they should also give it a go. After discussing the idea they agreed to exchange nude images via text.

Callum felt that the experience was 'awkward' and 'unnatural' and caused them to feel nervous and 'a bit weird around each other'. They did not discuss what had happened but Callum felt that they had not been ready to share such intimate images. Shortly afterwards they agreed to finish the relationship and Callum believes that this was fuelled by their experiences of sexting.

Although Callum had hoped that sharing images would bring them closer together, he feels that they acted too quickly and should not have been so keen to see what sexting was like. He would not consider sending anyone else a self-produced sexual image unless he was in a serious relationship and had already had sex. '... 'cause you've already seen each other and know what it's going to be like.'

It just doesn't really feel very nice afterwards. You think it's going to be a positive experience but then it really turns out to be a negative.

Jack, Age 17

Jack's advice to others would therefore be to talk though with the other person what you want to do and what you are comfortable with and to not be forced into sending anything.

Jack has been seeing his girlfriend for 3-4 months. They met at school and out of school hours regularly enjoy talking on FaceTime. In the last month they have been increasingly using FaceTime as a way to gain intimacy '...you want to feel closer sometimes so that's when we might make it... a bit more intimate,' So far this includes regularly undressing to underwear in front of each other and talking in a 'playful,' more sexual way.

Jack views their experiences as '*nice, private*' moments and as a means of enhancing and building their relationship. He believes that they are gradually becoming closer as a result of their shared experiences.

...you have to trust [the person] a lot in order to do that. I wouldn't do it with anyone unless I was really close.

Jack likens FaceTime to a phone call, whereby '*...it's just happening there and then and it's not just a deliberate way of showing things, it just sort of happens*'. He finds this a more natural, comfortable and safer way of engaging with his girlfriend. Jack views sending images via text as 'a bit too risky' as once saved, they can be passed on to others.

Jack never used to understand why young people would send self-produced sexual images and viewed it as '*stupid*' and '*needless*'. However, since he has experienced a more serious relationship he can understand why others do it. Although he feels '*relaxed*' during his experiences with his girlfriend he believes that if she started demanding anything it would make it difficult to continue.

Josie, Age 19

Josie enjoys making and sharing images; she feels proud of her photographic creations and appreciates the positive feedback she receives. Josie believes that her experiences help her to further develop body-confidence.

Josie's first experience of sending self-produced sexual images happened when she was 15 years old. Unable to meet up with her partner regularly they began exchanging images a few months into their relationship. Josie initially felt uncomfortable but agreed to carry on. Following a breakup, Josie's images were then shared online by her partner. As she could not be identified by the pictures Josie was not too concerned by the experience.

A couple of years later Josie began sexting another partner. Although she exchanged a number of images with this partner, the sexual nature of the images did not interest her. Instead she liked her partner to gain pleasure from receiving sext messages.

More recently, Josie started taking nude and nearly nude images of herself and posting them on her private accounts and social media sites. As she feels increasingly comfortable with her body, Josie wants to express this by posting images. Josie believes she has posted around 70 sexual images in total. During the process Josie likes to take a number of images and then '...study all the flaws and the good bits.' Any images that she dislikes are deleted.

Because of her past experiences Josie continues to exclude her face from self-produced images and remains aware of potential negative consequences.

It's a self-confidence thing because I'm more comfortable with my body now and I'm doing it for me, as opposed to doing it for someone else now. I want to show people that I'm confident with my body.

I know that once you've posted an image online basically you don't really have ownership over it anymore.

EXISTING RESOURCES

A great insight into young people's point of views about existing educational resources on sexting, our partner at The University of Edinburgh explored in their focus groups report whether young people prefer messages about the risks of sexting to be presented in a certain format or style ; whether they feel these messages are being effectively conveyed; and if and how education resources might be improved. An additional aim was to seek young people's views on the aspects of materials that they believe would appeal to parents and professionals learning about these issues.

Across the five focus groups distinctive themes emerged. In general, participants favoured the following aspects of design and content:

- An eye-catching format: The young people were drawn to bright, glossy, colourful pictures, and booklets with quotes and diagrams, punctuated with short information bulletins, facts and clearly defined support links.
- Relevant or believable messages conveyed in visual materials: Videos were favoured over other formats but only when the young people felt that they could relate to the storyline/characters and could understand and believe in their experiences.
- Interactive materials - whether this be opportunities to engage in a board game, a scripted play, or a discussion around a particular issue/topic.

They were also consistent in highlighting their dissatisfaction with the following:

- Documents presenting lengthy blocks of text, over-crowded, detailed pages and a lack of colour or '*dull*' colours.
- A shortage of serious message content, unrealistic scenarios, or light-hearted or '*jokey*' materials.
- Posters: The least popular medium, with the young people suggesting that they struggled to convey any meaningful message about the issues and consequences of sexting and would largely go unnoticed.

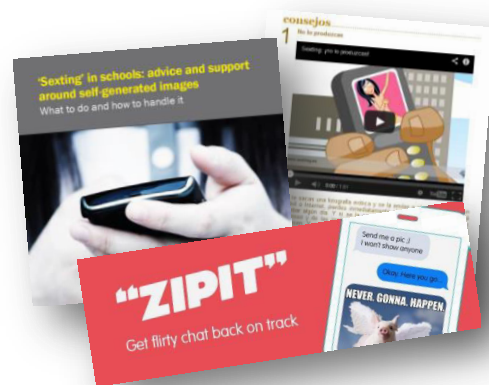
Participants concluded that parents and professionals would benefit from:

- A combination of resources (i.e. a realistic video drama and a short, colourful, easy to read, booklet), offering a balanced array of facts, diagrams and advice and drawing on the experiences of young people and other parents as well as those in authority.

FULL REPORT

<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/resources/exploring-young-peoples-views>

Participants examined 25 different resources aimed at young people, parents and teachers. The resources were all taken from the SPIRTO online resource directory. The directory is a comprehensive list of advice, information and education resources parents, professionals and children and young people can use to respond to issues arising from young's people self-taken nude or nearly nude images. It enabled the project to quickly review and evaluate current resources on this topic, identify best practice and gaps. The directory also helped ensure that SPIRTO resources would build on rather than duplicate the fantastic resources which are already available.



SPIRTO online resource directory

<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/resources/resources-directory>



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

Our partner in Germany Innocence in Danger conducted focus groups with professional carers as well as parents, asking them what they know and what they still need to learn about selfies and sexting. Published in SPIRTO's Newsletter February 2015:

Focus on Germany

Our partner Innocence In Danger e.V. conducted focus groups with 90 individuals in Germany in order to find out more about their understanding of adolescent selfies and sexting. The discussions also explored what participants feel they still need to learn around these issues.

Participants included parents of teenage children, professionals drawn from the fields of school social work, counselling, youth welfare agencies, therapy, and individuals working in residential homes, and with clinical outpatients.

The findings demonstrate that parental and professional understandings of sexting vary considerably, with some individuals admitting to a lack of knowledge about the subject and others recognising sexting as an increasingly timely and important topic in their work with children and young people. The discussions further revealed that parents and professionals are keen to increase their understanding and to learn how best to approach the subject with adolescents. In general, participants:

- are aware of the access young people have to smartphones and are generally familiar with issues linked to 'sexting' but remain unsure about its definitions and prevalence;
- have some knowledge of instances where self-produced images have resulted in negative outcomes or 'gone wrong';
- are keen to learn how to address the topic and/or to overcome a lack of understanding around digital media, non-consensual image sharing and group dynamics/cyberbullying;
- feel that young people are often embarrassed to raise the topic but are nevertheless interested and attentive when it is discussed - although such discussions are currently very infrequent;
- require guidance and training in order to effectively work with young people on sexting and its consequences.

In terms of specific information needs, participants highlighted the importance of making available further guidelines, information and nationwide campaigns on:

- Sexting, digital media, social networks, the distribution of images and cyberbullying;
- how and when to raise these issues with children and adolescents;
- what to do if children and adolescents turn to them for help, support and information;
- where they can find guidance and information on the subject

Innocence in Danger e.V. developed with axxessio the prevention app "Clever im Netz" for children (9-11 yo). Besides information, education, advice and contact to aid organisations for parents on the sexual abuse of children on the Internet, several comics offer children tips for a clever behaviour in dealing with the internet. Available in German only.



www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk | @spirtoproject



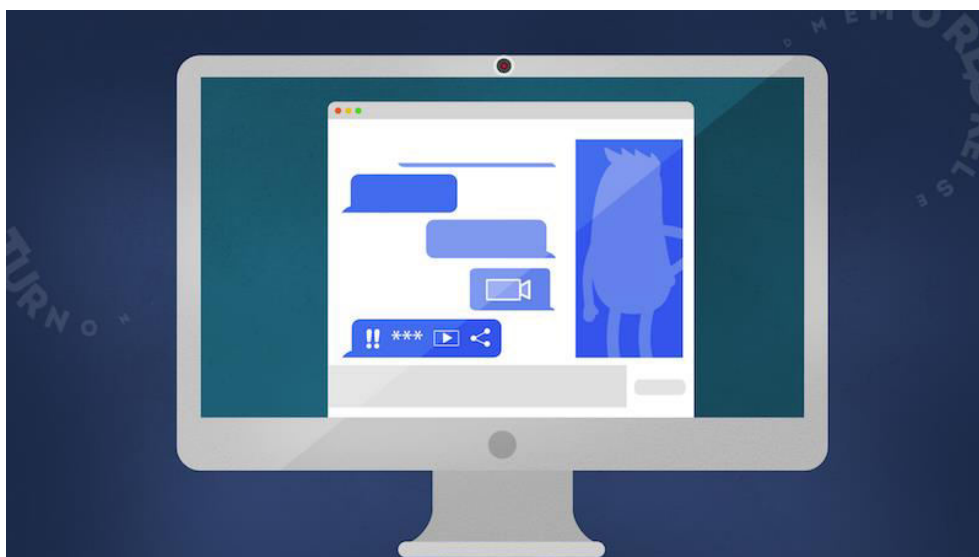
TRAINING MATERIAL

SPIRTO's objective was to build on existing knowledge, along with what was learned from the young people interviewed, to generate educational materials, including a film, concerning the risks of converged technologies, and mobile connectivity in particular, and to assess the evidence of the impact of these materials on knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Livingstone et al (2011) concluded that 'Parental awareness of risks and safety online needs to be enhanced. The priority for awareness-raising for parents should be on alerting parents to the nature of the risks their children may encounter online while encouraging dialogue and greater understanding between parents and children in relation to young people's online activities'. The work of Von Weiler (2010) in Germany would suggest that this is also the case for professionals, particularly in the context of illegal content. Finkelhor (2009) in a review of 'what works' in child protection concluded that the strongest evidence base is education and one of SPIRTO partners, CEOP, already had considerable expertise in this area from their educational programme, 'ThinkUKnow', and Innocence in Danger had been responsible for the development of educational films for young people.

FILM and WORKSHOP MATERIALS

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Nude-Selfies-What-parents-and-carers-need-to-know/>



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

THE EVIDENCE BASE

The development of the animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know* was based on emergent findings from the research phase of the SPIRTO project. It was also informed by a literature review of existing evidence and an evaluative review of existing educational materials related to the topic of self-taken images. Findings from these three strands formed the basis for a specification for the new resource for parents and carers.

SPIRTO Research: initial findings

SPIRTO researchers identified three key themes as important to the development of the resource for parents and practitioners, as follows:

- Context of image production: how and why young people take and share images
- Young people's outlook, feelings and willingness to discuss the topic
- Young people's advice to parents on responding to incidents

Context of image production

Life Online

Young people spend a lot of their time online and feel knowledgeable about life online. They feel very confident in their understanding of the online environment and acknowledge that their understanding is greater than their parents' or teachers', making them less likely to seek help from them if they have a problem. As is common with many other studies, young people do not differentiate between being online and offline.

Young people seem to have some informal rules or codes of behaviour online amongst their peers. An example was given of a young person whose ex-boyfriend had posted sexual photos she had sent during their relationship on to Facebook following their break up. Friends of both the girl and her ex-boyfriend commented that he shouldn't have done this and asked him to remove the images. Young people tended to not link levels of risk with what is depicted in the image itself – for example an image some nudity intended to be humorous compared with a sexual nude image – but rather focused on the breach of trust between the sender and the recipient(s) when an image had been shared more widely than the sender had intended. These peer norms could be tapped into to reinforce safety messages from parents.

Peer Relationships

Many of the young people interviewed reported having problems at school or with their peers and feeling lonely. As a result they often they felt motivated to go online to seek new friendships and develop relationships. Overall, young people tended to seek online friendships and contact with the opposite sex to flirt or establish romantic or sexual relationships (the interviews discussed as part of these initial findings were with heterosexual young people only). The context of these relationships and the interactions young people were seeking online may then increase the likelihood of sharing nude or nearly nude images.

Trust in Peers

An important context and potentially a motivator for the sharing of images was trust. The concept of trust and its importance in young people's peer relationships - in both sexual and non-sexual contexts - and relationships with adults was a common theme in interviews. In most contexts of sharing self-produced images trust has already been established between the sender and the recipient(s) before an image is shared. However the sharing of such images may also act as a confirmation of trust in a relationship.

Trust in Adults

With regards to the trust that young people placed in adults, grandparents were identified as playing an important and trusted source of support in the lives of UK young people interviewed. Some young people interviewed commented that teachers' reactions to incidents could sometimes be unhelpful, as their response was often to focus on and blame the young person who had initially created and/or shared the image.

It was highlighted that educational messages from adults should address the recipient more than the sender, linking to young people's understanding of trust and respect for their partner or members of the opposite sex in relationships.

Sex & Arousal

Amongst the group interviewed, young people often sent self-produced nude or nearly nude images before being sexually active. This raises important questions about the relationship between self produced images, arousal and sexual activity.

Images may be sent as part of a sexual relationship - to a boyfriend or girlfriend - or they may be sent to friends or contacts that the young person is not and has no intention of entering in to a sexual relationship with. Images may also be sent and received with or without sexual interest. Senders and/or recipients may be aroused by the sending or receiving of an image, with girls reporting being more aroused by sending images than receiving them. However amongst those interviewed both boys and girls mentioned not finding the sending or receiving of an image sexually arousing.

Often images may be sent or received for fun or as a joke. Most frequently images that are sent and shared for fun contain erotic posing or nearly nude images, rather than more sexual images. Images tend to be more sexual in content if the sender and recipient were in a relationship. Images were also much more likely to contain identifying details in this context, e.g. their entire body including their face. These two factors may in fact make these sorts of images potentially more harmful if shared more widely than intended than those sent for fun. Additionally, those young people who intentionally sent more sexual images to a wider group (i.e. to strangers or posting on a social network or form) were more likely to try to remove any identifying features from the images, e.g. not including their face or distinctive tattoos or piercings.

Affirmation

A universal theme amongst the young people interviewed – whether they sent images for fun or were pressured in to doing so - was the need to be 'seen' and the sense of affirmation and validation they gained from creating and sharing a nude or nearly nude image of themselves. However this sense of validation is short-lived regularly resulting in them sending more images to regain this feeling. Also mentioned was the need to make themselves look good in the images they shared, choosing flattering poses – inspired by images in the media and potentially pornography - and editing images before sending. Those who posted their images on a website or shared them with a wider group (as opposed to with a partner, for example) said that they do so in the knowledge and with the

expectation that they will mainly get positive comments. However they also know that they will receive some negative comments. The impact of these negative comments varies from none at all to being very impactful. This seemed to be dependent on whether the negative comments focus on something that the young person is sensitive about or are from an influential peer.

With the seeking of validation through the sharing of these images being such an important motivator, a strategy for parents could be to advise their children of other ways of gaining this validation both in the short-term and the long-term.

Image Circulation

Shared images spreading wider than originally intended can be exciting and fun for young people. However if a young person has been forced or pressured in to self-producing and sharing an image this is more likely to be upsetting.

Initial Experience

Interviewers enquired with young people about the first time they self-produced and shared nude or nearly nude images of themselves. For most respondents, images had been produced for fun and as a result they could not recall the first time they had done this. If a young person had been forced or pressured in to producing an image this was a much more significant event for them and they could generally recall the incident.

Young people's outlook

Attitudes

In general, the young people interviewed were accepting of the sharing of nude or nearly nude images. However they were more hesitant when considering the possibility of close friends or family members engaging in this behaviour, e.g. a younger sibling. Interviews also often featured wider discussions about gender roles, expectations in relationships and pornographic consumption. It is important to address the experiences, motivations and expectations of young people from the perspective of different genders in messages for parents.

Privacy

Young people don't feel comfortable talking about creating and sharing self-produced naked images. They view this to be very private and personal to them. Like somebody discussing their sex life, they feel that this is something that they only feel comfortable discussing with a close friend or with a friend who has had similar experiences. They may only be compelled to talk about it with an adult if a problematic situation arises.

Amongst those interviewed there were young people who used the taking and sharing of nude or nearly nude images as a form of self-harm. Clearly, young people engaging in this destructive type of behaviour would benefit from intervention. However this should be balanced with the need to respect young people's privacy, particularly when they request or expect it. Parents need advice on identifying when they should be concerned, when to intervene and how to do this.

Advice to Others

When asked what advice they would provide to other young people, those interviewed advised that other young people should not post anything that they're not happy with being spread further. This is particularly noteworthy as a common education message around the issue of 'sexting' is to encourage young people to 'think before you post'. This potentially may be a message that the young people have previously heard in online safety education

sessions that they have repeated or adapted when asked for advice. This does question the effectiveness of this type of advice as these young people had potentially heard it, but ignored it.

Additionally, young people would encourage their peers to take these sorts of images in a 'safe' way if they're going to do so, such as not including any identifying features or only sharing with a trusted partner, etc.

Advice from young people to parents

Initial Reaction

The importance of a calm, non-judgemental reaction to being made aware of their child's engagement in sending and/or receiving nude or nearly nude images was emphasised. However it was also noted that parents ignoring or not dealing with incidents of their children sharing these types of images can be just as upsetting for young people as their parents having angry or judgemental reactions. Young people said that it was important that parents don't ignore this behaviour and try to understand their child's motivations. Young people also advised that parents should improve their knowledge and understanding of young people's lives online because it is an important part of their lives.

Positive Experiences

There were young people who reported that they had had a positive experience in terms of their parents' reaction to their behaviour. In these instances parents had not ignored their child's behaviour, they had acknowledged it and clearly explained to their child their opinion of this type of behaviour – generally not approving or encouraging. Crucially, their parents had also made it clear that they remained understanding and approachable on this issue. These young people felt that they knew their parents trusted them to make their own decisions and would be supportive even if they had gone against their parents' advice and needed help as a consequence.

Key findings from existing research

SPIRTO's young-people centred, qualitative research methodology represents a new departure in research into self-taken nude or nearly nude images. However, a literature review of existing evidence highlighted some findings valuable in the development of a resource for parents and practitioners:

Sexting prevalence and correlates: a systematic review (Klettke et al, 2014)

- Adults are much more likely than teenagers to be engaging in sexting activity: both sending and receiving. In studies of adolescents, 'older age is a significant predictor of sexting activity'.
- While findings are mixed with regards to gender, some research identifies that females are more likely to send and males more likely to receive nude or nearly nude self-taken images.
- It is clear that pressure to send sexts received or perceived by females is a significant factor.
- Motivations for sexting are varied, and include being 'fun and flirtatious', 'to be sexy or initiate sexual activity', as a 'joke', 'to gain attention from a partner', as a form of 'self-expression' and 'pressure' from partners and peers. However it was clear pressure received or perceived by females to send sexts was a significant emerging

theme, which may also be a causal factor for females being more likely to send sexts.

- Several studies find an association (although not necessarily causal) between sexting and 'a higher likelihood of being sexually active, as well as engagement in a range of sexual risk behaviours'.
- Being in a romantic relationship is an indicator for likelihood of engagement in sexting.
- Those who have engaged in sexting activity tend to have more positive feelings towards it.
- Whether or not they have engaged in sexting, individuals report awareness of the potential risks of sexting and are aware of possible negative outcomes.

Sexting, Consent and Young People's Ethics: Beyond Megan's Story (Albury and Crawford 2012)

- The majority of young people interviewed had not sent or received a sext, but reported knowing a peer who had.
- Young people reported sexting behaviour taking place in a range of non-sexual as well as sexual and romantic contexts.
- Young people were not aware of the legal context of sending nude/nearly nude images.

Consensual sexting amongst adolescents: risk prevention through abstinence education or safer sexting? (Doring, 2014)

- Consensual sexting should be differentiated from scenarios involving pressure, blackmail, or sending images without consent.
- A review of the literature's coverage of risk and opportunity shows that a deviance discourse is dominant. The majority of papers represent sexting as a 'sexuality-related youth phenomenon' and focuses on negative consequences including criminal prosecution, despite evidence that adults are more likely to engage in sexting behaviour than adolescents, and that adolescent sexting takes place in a wide range of contexts.
- However there is an emergent normalcy discourse, which presents sexting as a normal and intimate form of communication particularly within romantic and sexual relationships.
- Evaluation of sexting risk prevention messages from ten educational campaigns aimed at young people concludes that these rely on scare tactics and address only heterosexual cisgender young people. There is frequent female victim-blaming, focus on negative consequences, and promotion of abstinence messaging. There is strong emphasis on the illegality of sexting.
- Young people report sharing their own risk management strategies on social networks and online discussion forums. These focus on: reciprocity and trust; strategies for anonymising images; and advice on legal action against non-consensual sexting.

Review of existing education resources

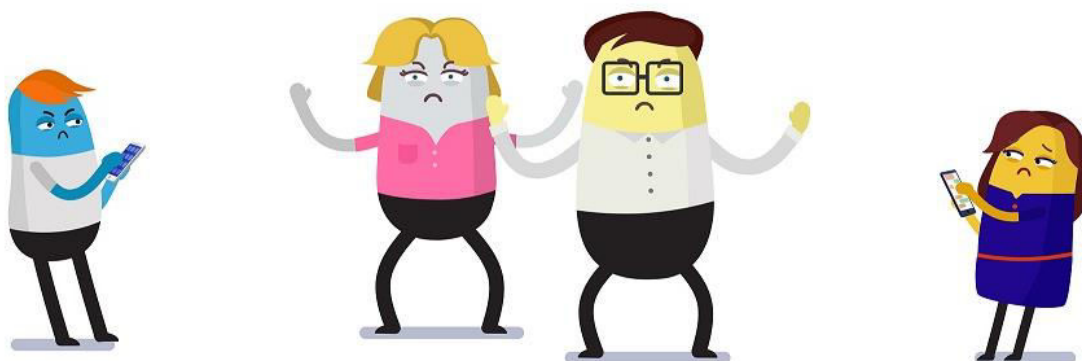
A review of educational materials was undertaken by the SPIRTO project's research team to identify those that are relevant to the topic of self produced images. Following this, CEOP's Education team evaluated the resources included in the review to identify good practice,

gaps in provision and develop ideas for the production of a new resource for parents and carers.

Evaluation Criteria

Prior to evaluating the resources, CEOP's Education team, along with a CEOP social worker with expertise in protecting children against abuse and exploitation online, developed a set of criteria outlining what should be addressed by a resource aimed at parents, focussing on young people self producing and sharing nude or nearly nude images. It was agreed that best practice resources should address the following to fully support parents:

1. Parents'/carers' shock at discovering their child has engaged in creating and/or sharing self produced images
2. Support parents'/carers' practical response to an incident, by presenting the technological and legal options available to them to remove images, minimise the spread of images and if appropriate pursue actions against others involved in the incident
3. Help parents/carers to support their child in the future by facilitating supportive conversations with their child
4. Help parents/carers to discuss self-produced sexual images with their children by providing them with:
 - a. a deep understanding of the motivations for producing such images
 - b. the social and individual context of image production
 - c. the potential consequences of sharing such images
 - d. effective strategies for engaging with their children on the topic.
5. Help parents recognise indicators that their child might be involved in harmful self-production of images



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

Results of Resource Evaluation

Of the 66 resources identified by the SPIRTO research team's resource review, 28 were aimed at parents or practitioners. All 66 resources were evaluated and considered against the above criteria.

Some clear themes emerged.

- No single resource addressed all five areas identified in the questions.
- Resources spent too much time defining 'sexting' and using prevalence statistics (often without citing sources) to contextualise the activity. Explorations of dynamics and motives were generally superficial.
- A number of resources focused on the consequences of self-produced images. These included the potential legal consequences for young people. They emphasised that parents should ensure that their children were aware of these consequences.
- There was a lack of emphasis on motivations for image production and the context within which it takes place. The exceptions to this were two resources from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.
- Resources provided some tips on how to start a discussion with children but limited advice on how to follow up the discussion.

Overall, most resources provided little more than a superficial overview of why young people self-produced and distributed images and none helped parents to unpick the variety of types of behaviour that image production might represent or be indicative of.

Through the evaluation it was noted that the main potential consequences of 'self-produced images' are relatively well understood. It is well known that self-produced images can:

- Make young people vulnerable to bullying
- Increase young people's likelihood of being approached by sex offenders (depending on the context of the distribution of the images)
- Have legal consequences. Though the actual consequences for young people vary case by case and depending on the response of agencies in their local area, in the UK there is a legislation which covers indecent images of children and currently applies whether these images are self-produced or not.

Also generally well understood are the technical processes at parents' disposal to have images removed from websites, or request for their removal on the grounds that they are illegal images. However this information is still useful to present to parents as they are not a homogenous group and will have varying levels of knowledge and confidence of these technical processes.

The resource evaluation concluded that a resource developed as a product of the SPIRTO project should meet all the evaluation criteria. In doing so it should endeavour to bridge the known gaps in knowledge around young people's behaviour associated with self produced images through knowledge gained from SPIRTO's research. It should also avoid dwelling on those elements of the issue which are well established, such as bullying being a possible consequence of sharing self produced images.

Based on the initial findings from SPIRTO research, the literature review and the evaluation of existing resources, it was established that the new resource should:

- Meet all of the evaluation criteria established by CEOP's Education Team and specialist social worker.
- Acknowledge that while sexting may be risky, it is not necessarily a deviant behaviour, and for many adults and young people it may be a normal part of their romantic or sexual relationships and friendships.
- Acknowledge the wide-ranging contexts and motivations for young people engaging in sexting and recognise that sexting is not a single behaviour.
- Integrate peer-based messaging, such as peer advice on risk management strategies and young people's recommendations on parental responses.
- Emphasise the importance of trust in relationship and the role and responsibilities of recipients as well as senders in sexting scenarios.
- Highlight the connections, or lack thereof, between young people engaging in this behaviour and engaging in sexual activity.
- Highlight seeking affirmation as an important motivator for young people producing and/or sharing nude or nearly nude images
- supportive and talk to your child: do not judge or get angry.

MESSAGES

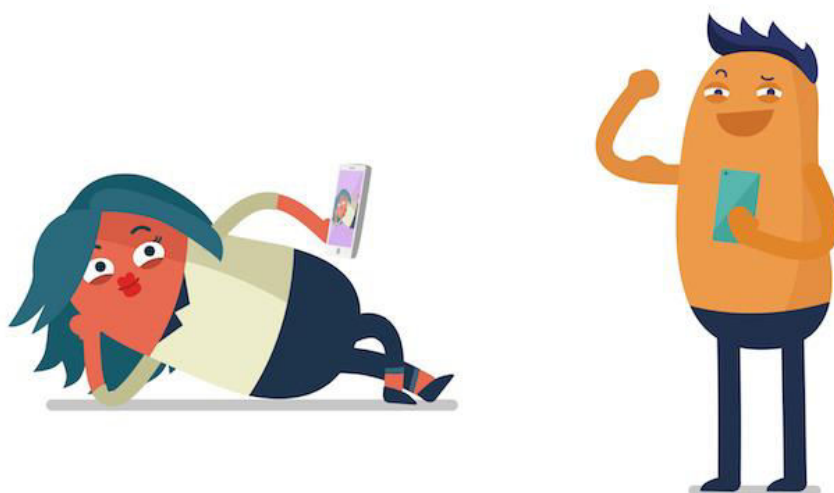
The messages to be communicated by the resource were grouped into three key areas of information and advice.

Helping parents to deal with their own emotions in discovering that their child has created and/or shared self produced nude or nearly nude images of themselves or their peers

- Strategies for providing supportive and non-judgemental reactions.
- Putting the creation and distribution of these images in the context of (their own) sexual development.
- Providing context around the prevalence of young people engaging in this behaviour. In providing information around prevalence care should be taken to avoid the use of confusing, meaningless or conflicting statistics.
- Informing parents that a young person's engagement in this behaviour does not mean that they are sexually active.

Advising parents on how to support their child, whether they are engaging in this behaviour already or not

- Guidance and strategies for facilitating conversations about the issue generally with their child. This should help parents to negotiate young people's likely reluctance to discuss the topic as they often consider this behaviour very personal and private. Additionally, this should include discussions on the importance of trust in relationships and the significance of breaching someone's trust.
- Guidance and strategies for communicating and negotiating boundaries with their child around their potential or known participation in this behaviour.
- Recognising the signs that their child may be engaging in this behaviour.
- Highlighting the importance of not ignoring the issue if their child is engaging in this behaviour. Even if the image itself or the context in which it was created is not illegal it may still have a harmful impact on the young person in the image.
- Recognising the spectrum of contexts within which these images may be created by a young person and recognising those which are inherently more risky or that may be an indicator of other causes for concern – answering the questions, 'When should I be worried?... What could this be a symptom of?'.
- Advising parents that they need to consider what they already know about their child's personality when considering if and how to intervene due to their child experiencing harm and that they should look out for exaggerations in their child's usual behaviour.
- Guidance on the support their child may need if they are distressed by or experience negative consequences as a result of creating and/or sharing self produced nude images.
- Guidance on helping their child to understand that the image(s) and what people may say or think about the image(s) does not define the young person depicted.
- Guidance on responding to an incident of their child participating in sharing an image(s) of their peers in a problematic context.



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

Providing parents with practical information on what they need to know to reduce the spread of images that have been shared

- Strategies for providing supportive and non-judgemental reactions.
- Putting the creation and distribution of these images in the context of (their own) sexual development.
- Providing context around the prevalence of young people engaging in this behaviour. In providing information around prevalence care should be taken to avoid the use of confusing, meaningless or conflicting statistics.
- Informing parents that a young person's engagement in this behaviour does not mean that they are sexually active.
- Advising on the legal context in their country and addressing any concerns they may have about any potential legal implications there may be for their child.
- Guidance on reporting to social networking sites.
- Guidance on reporting to the relevant police services and hotlines in their country.
- Guidance on the responsibilities of any other agencies that may be involved, such as their child's school or youth setting.

AUDIENCE

The SPIRTO project being an international partnership, the intended audience is international, specifically based in Germany and Sweden, as well as the UK. The resource is aimed at the following groups:

Parents and carers:

- With little or no knowledge about the issue of youth self produced indecent images.
- Who have heard of 'sexting' or similar terms in the media and are interested in further information about the issue.
- Seeking advice on interventions to prevent their child from engaging in this behaviour and how to respond effectively, minimising the risk to their child, should they engage in this behaviour.
- Responding to an incident of and/or discovering their child has taken and/or shared self produced indecent images of themselves or their peers.

Practitioners:

- This is a channel through which parents and carers will be reached.
- The Thinkuknow programme currently has a network of over 110,000 practitioners registered for access to resources.
- CEOP's Education team will develop guidance for practitioners on use of the resources with parents and carers.

DELIVERY AND DISTRIBUTION

The SPIRTO project website – www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk - and social media accounts, as well as those of partner members were an important platforms for the delivery and distribution of the resource. Additionally, the resource were delivered via a series of pilot workshops. The workshops were conducted with parents and practitioners in each of the participant countries, focussing on the outcomes and recommendations of the SPIRTO project's research.

Over 110,000 practitioners in the UK are registered to access resources from CEOP's Thinkuknow education programme, this includes materials for delivery to parents carers. For CEOP, its practitioner network is a powerful delivery and distribution mechanism, for example during 2013-14 it facilitated Thinkuknow resources being used with children and young people over 3.5 million times. The resource created as an outcome of the SPIRTO project will be amongst those available to practitioners through Thinkuknow to deliver and signpost to the parents and carers of children that they are working with. The resource is also hosted (embedded from CEOP's YouTube channel) on the Parents' and Carers' area of Thinkuknow website, which receives over 450,000 unique pageviews annually.

Production and Delivery

It was fundamental to the success of the resource as a product of the SPIRTO project that the production company's creative treatment of the brief fully accommodated the need for localisation and translation in to the 3 languages of the SPIRTO partners i.e. English, German and Swedish. In consideration of this it was advised that written text should be kept to a minimum and that any voice overs or speaking parts should be kept to a minimum number of roles, ideally a single voice over role.

RESOURCE PRODUCTION

Film Treatment: *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers Need to Know*

Following a competitive tender process, Malt Productions was selected to produce the new resource. Malt's proposed treatment impressed the CEOP Education Team: its creative approach showed an excellent understanding of audience needs and ways of communicating messages on sensitive issues.

Key elements of the treatment:

- The resource is based on a realistic first-person narrative told by a parent whose child has been involved in a sexting incident, and for whom there were no serious negative consequences.
- The tone is one of peer-to-peer support and advice from a parent who has learnt from her experience and from lay-person research into the topic but is not an 'expert'.
- The animation will support the narration and will be non-realistic, weaving story-telling in with visual metaphor. This will enable lightness of touch, the use of humour, a non-threatening treatment of the difficult issue of depicting young people taking nude/nearly nude images, and an abstraction away from any particular social background.

- The resource is made up of a series of four short animated films, three covering the areas of messaging set out in the requirements, and a fourth supporting parents and practitioners to understand and risk assess a range of sexting behaviours in young people.

Film Production: Challenges and Resolutions

The resource was developed in six stages:

1. Development of 'master' script in English
2. Development of core elements of visual treatment: characters and backgrounds
3. Translation into German and Swedish, with adaptation for each audience/context
4. Voiceover recordings in English, Swedish and German
5. Development of animation to accompany all three voiceovers, with regional adaptations
6. Development of opening and closing title screens for each language version

Several challenges arose during the development of the resource.

Gender

It was essential that the resource should feel accessible and relevant to single-parent families. Since there are significantly more single mothers than fathers with main caring responsibilities, a female narrator (called Ann in the UK version) was selected.

This created two further challenges: firstly, ensuring that the resource promoted the positive involvement of both parents whether they were still a couple or not; and second, ensuring that the resource would feel accessible and relevant to fathers. The solution adopted was to depict the father of Ann's children as engaged throughout, while not presenting him as unambiguously in a relationship with Ann. Throughout the story, Ann makes decisions about how to respond in partnership with the children's father. He is also depicted as participating in the conversation with his son about the incident, providing on-going support to his son and daughter, and researching sources of support online.

While the mother and father are sometimes pictured together in scenes in which their children are also present, they are never depicted unambiguously as a couple.

Non-expert voice

Ann's status as a parent talking from experience presented great opportunities in terms of engaging parents, breaking down assumptions about sexting behaviour, and helping the audience consider a topic which they may be resistant to engaging with.

However Ann could only tell one story, and it was essential that the resource communicated some wider findings from the SPIRTO research as well as presenting the audience with a range of sexting motivations, behaviours, and possible consequences. The solution adopted was to present Ann as a reflective, wise individual who was self-aware and honest about her own instinctive responses, and who was able to try and recommend new parenting strategies, and to warn against others. The character presented wider knowledge about sexting in the context of having used selected websites (for example, CEOP's Thinkuknow Families website) to research the issue, through talking to friends and engaging in discussion forums online.

Language

Research has widely found that most young people do not recognise or use the term 'sexting', and that many adults find the term confusing and misleading. For this reason, it

was decided to use clear, descriptive terms which would be understood across audiences, including 'nude selfies', 'naked selfies', 'revealing images', 'revealing pictures', 'pictures that show more than you would expect'. It was important to use terms that young people would recognise and respond to in order to model the use of this language to parents for communicating with their own children about these issues.

It was important that the descriptive terms did not limit understanding of the wide range of motivations for engaging in sexting behaviour, and for this reason words like 'sexual' or 'erotic' were not used in this context. Furthermore, in order to promote the authenticity of Ann's voice and to support audience engagement, more complex or 'academic sounding' terms such as 'self-taken images' and 'nude or nearly-nude images' were not used.

Use in diverse settings

A set of further challenges arose as a result of the fact that the resource was to be adapted for use in three European countries with different languages, cultural attitudes and norms, legal contexts and availability of support around sexting incidents.

Partners in Germany and Sweden made appropriate adaptations to ensure it was culturally appropriate and factually correct. Issues arising included:

- Parents' more relaxed attitudes to their children's sexual development and to nudity in general in Sweden as compared to the UK. This was addressed through nuanced changes to the script.
- The perception that Swedish families were likely to be less hetero-normative than depicted in the films. This was addressed through the workshop materials developed to support practitioners in presenting the film to parents.
- A lack of specialist advice or law enforcement support for families coping with sexting incidents in Sweden. This impacted on the degree to which Film Four ('How to Get Help') would be useful to a Swedish audience, as it could only advocate reporting criminal incidents to police. However, our Swedish partners felt that the English and German versions of Film Four could provide useful lobbying evidence in making a case for the need for more specialist services in this field in Sweden.



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*

WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT

Two workshop outlines were developed, one for parents and a second ‘train the trainer’ session for practitioners planning to run a workshop for parents.

A guidance document for practitioners was produced to support them to deliver workshops for parents effectively and safely, in line with the principles above.

Additionally, an editable poster/flyer was created to support practitioners to promote their sessions to parents. The workshops were translated into Swedish and German, and adapted as appropriate for those audiences.

The following principles informing the workshop format were based on expertise gained by the CEOP Education Team through delivery of the well-established Thinkuknow education programme:

- An informal, collaborative, empowering and enabling learning environment should be established
- The workshop should aim to promote attitude, knowledge and behaviour change
- The workshop should be highly interactive, promoting free discussion and enabling participants to learn from each other as well as the workshop leader
- The basis of the workshop and films in research evidence should be clear to both parents and practitioners
- Participants should leave the workshop with clear messages about how to access support from several agencies, where to get further advice and information, and how to report abuse
- All participants should be clear on what to do and who to speak to if they need to make a child protection disclosure
- Practitioners should receive clear advice on best practice in responding to child protection disclosures

Workshop and Resource Evaluation

Methodology

With support from SPIRTO the team at The University of Edinburgh, the CEOP Education Team devised a simple questionnaire-based evaluation methodology primarily aimed at measuring attitude and knowledge change as a result of participating in workshops based around a viewing of the films, and also attempting to capture some indication of behaviour change. Workshop participants were asked to complete a questionnaire capturing attitudes and knowledge before participating. They then complete the same questionnaire immediately after the workshop, at which point they are also asked to predict potential changes in their own behaviour as a result of participation. Finally, participants are invited to take part in an online survey three months later, in order to measure longer-term impact on attitudes and knowledge and to self-report any actual behaviour change in that period.

Evaluation Results

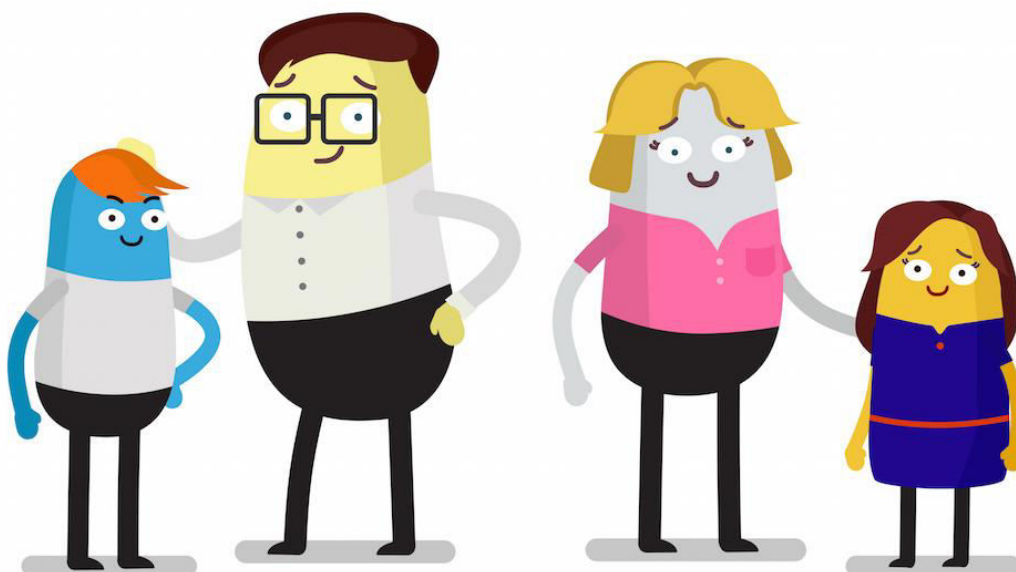
Of the total of 326 evaluation forms completed, 234 were completed by practitioners (this group includes those in Workshop 1 who ticked the 'both' category) and 92 were completed by parents/carers.

Summary of findings

- Participation in the pilot workshop had a significant positive impact on the attitudes and knowledge of both practitioner and parent/carer cohorts.
- Participants' attitudes to young people's behaviours around self-taken nude and nearly-nude images became more nuanced and less 'worst case focused' as a result of participation.
- After attending the workshop, levels of knowledge across all measured areas were at, or close to, 100% agreement or strong agreement.
- Following the workshop, a large majority of both practitioners and parents predicted that the films would impact on their future behaviour.
- The extent of change in attitude, knowledge and predicted behaviour tended to be greater for the parent/carer group than for practitioners.
- There was one notable exception to the above, around confidence levels. Before the workshop, parents/carers indicated higher levels of confidence about talking to their children than practitioners indicated about talking to parents. Nonetheless, the workshop still had a strong positive impact in increasing levels of confidence cited by both cohorts.

FULL WORKSHOPS REPORT

<http://www.spirto.health.ed.ac.uk/resources/training-material>



Still from the SPIRTO animated films *Nude Selfies: What Parents and Carers need to know*



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